DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 186 318 SO 012 554

AUTHOR Jackson, Robert M.
TITLE Assessing a Political Skills Curriculum.
PUB DATE Mar 80
NOTE 31p.: Paper prepared for delivery at Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association (Los Angeles, CA, March 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Basic Skills; *Citizen Participation; Citizenship Education; Collective Bargaining; Course Descriptions; Course Evaluation; Decision Making Skills; Games; Higher Education; Political Attitudes; Political Influences; Political Issues; Political Power; *Political Science; Role Playing; Simulation; *Skill Development; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This paper describes and evaluates a political skills course for college students. Course objectives include teaching students to do the following: organize and run a meeting; bargain effectively; communicate within and between groups; manage a crisis; organize a political coalition; be aware of personal stress and some of the ways to reduce it; understand the substance of a number of current political issues; and learn about the dynamics of political conflict and cooperation. An attitude survey given to students at the beginning of the course revealed that the students were optimistic and positive about themselves and strongly felt that they would benefit and learn from the course. The major teaching method used in the course was simulations and gaming. Students were involved in many role-playing situations including values clarification and collective-bargaining exercises. In parts of the course students were confronted with a crisis situation, such as a Soviet laser attack of an American missile test flight, and had to make decisions under conditions of stress. On both the standardized and open-ended evaluations, students gave the course a very positive evaluation. On the standardized evaluation, a three item scale designed to measure student perceived learning was ranked consistently at the top or above University-wide norms (25th to 75th percentile range). In the voluntary, open-ended written evaluation, 78% of those who wrote evaluations explicitly made positive comments about the course. (Author/RM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED186318

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Robert M. Jackson
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

MAY 19 1980

ASSESSING A POLITICAL SKILLS CURRICULUM

by

Robert M. Jackson

Department of Political Science

California State University, Chico

SP 012 554

Discussion Paper 80-5

Prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association; March, 1980, Los Angeles, CA.

> "The keynote of democracy as a way of life may be expressed as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in the formation of the values that regulate the living of men together." (Dewey, 1937:457)

In the past few years there has been considerable interest in the teaching of values, especially the values necessary for the perpetuation of a democratic system. It is interesting that this discussion, while important by itself, overlooks Dewey's concern about "participation." An individual can conceivably have very egalitarian values but nevertheless be unable to effectively participate in the decisions that affect his/her life simply because they lack the skills to do so. Values by themselves do not make a social system. A pattern of behavior involving leadership, decision-making, participation, and so forth is the manifestation from which values are often inferred. Until an individual is able to participate in the political/economic marketplace with some success, what they think or believe is unimportant in comparison to their nonparticipation.

The experiences a person has in their contact with society have a far greater impact on his/her values than moralizing from either pulpit or lecturn. Attitudes are far more likely to conform with behavior than exist in isolation. Change behavior and attitudes are far more likely to change than the other way around. Prescribing democratic values in an educational system that is often bureaucratic and authoritarian is like telling students that they must be able to quickly take good notes and read large amounts of work with good comprehension without ever teaching them shorthand or speed reading. We often expect students to know things without ever instructing them. "Working in groups" is perhaps the classic example. All through life we are expected to work in groups, and yet how many people have ever been given a systematic education in this basic activity? To go one step further--how does this self-education process affect an individual's moral and ethical view of the world?

Bruno Bettelheim, in a recent essay, argues that the lack of a value of "delayed gratification (which is instilled by fear) is what blocks under privileged children from having a successful educational experience. Their experience, unlike that of the traditional middle class, teaches them the pleasure principle. Bettelheim goes on to argue that schools must first experientially teach the former principal if those children are to learn. Behavioral changes, in short, will change values toward school (Bettelheim, 1979). In much the same way, I believe, values relating to individual participation (in the formation of the policies that regulate their lives) also must be taught experientially, especially if a democratic value system is to be anything more than pure mythos.

Identifying what specific skills an individual must have in order to participate in the contemporary world with some degree of success may reveal more about this author than it does about the realities of the world we live in. Nonetheless, I believe there are six basic behavioral skills that I have focused on for the purposes of teaching political skills:

1. Organizational skills (including how to "define" a problem and how to run a meeting)
2. Leadership
3. Bargaining
4. Stress management
5. Crisis management
6. Coalition building

These specific skills go beyond the concept identification orientation that many human potential and executive training programs contain in their curricula. A more "self-actualized" personality, for example, can be used in the military establishment as well as in the neighborhood co-op. It was a different and less abstract set of goals that I established. In the course syllabus students were told that "upon completion of the course," they would:

1. Be able to more successfully organizae and run a meeting.
2. Be able to bargain more effectively.
3. Be able to communicate within and between groups more effectively.
4. Be able to manage a crisis more effectively.
5. Be experienced in organizing a political coalition.
6. Be more aware of personal stress and some of the ways to reduce it.
7. Be more aware of the substance of a number of current political issues.
8. Be more aware of the dynamics of political conflict and cooperation.

To successfully fulfill such a specific set of course goals required two tasks. The first was designing a curriculum, and the second evaluating what indeed was taking place in the course.

Background

To understand the nature of the course that I designed, I believe it is first necessary to describe the student clientele, for one to a certain degree defines the other. Enrollees in the political skills course (laboratory) are recruited primarily from introductory courses in American Government and International Relations. The one unit, credit/no credit lab course is, however, open to all students at the California State University, Chico.

This residential campus draws from throughout California and increasingly from beyond state borders. Students are, however, hardly a cross-section of "average" college students. In an anonymous public opinion poll conducted in the required American Government course, students reported family incomes with a median point of approximately $30,000. This same pretest poll of approximately 300 students taken over two semesters also revealed a political value system that Everett Ladd describes as "new liberalism" (Ladd, 1978).

TABLE 1

Selected Political Attitudes of American Government Students (pretest)

ITEM	a	b	c	d	e	f
Congress represents the special interests and not the voters.	9%	37%	22%	10%	1%	21%
Big business has too much say in the making of public policy.	30%	45%	11%	7%	2%	6%
The rich and well-born have distinct political advantages over the rest of Americans.	28%	51%	9%	6%	2%	4%
Environmentalists are unduly concerned about pollution.	3%	14%	12%	34%	32%	4%
The U.S. role in world affairs can best be described as an empire.	4%	27%	26%	20%	5%	19%
Capitalists economics is a major threat to environmental quality.	13%	27%	20%	13%	3%	25%
Government bureaucracy is a growing threat to individual freedom.	15%	46%	20%	5%	2%	12%

a-strongly agree b-agree c-neutral d-disagree

e-strongly disagree f-don't know/no opinion

All scores rounded to nearest whole number.

Questions regarding drug use also indirectly reveal a great deal about the population from which the political skills course was selected. The discrimination between "types" of cigarettes is interesting as are the figures on alcohol and cocaine. Similar questions on attitude surveys in the skills course and demographic comparisons indicate that the lab students generally were representative of the broader student population.

TABLE 2

Drug Use of American Government Students (pretest)

ITEM	NEVER	ONCE OR TWICE	SELDOM (few times a year)	OCCASIONALLY (few times a month)	WEEKLY	DAILY
Coffee	22%	10%	11%	21%	15%	21%
Cigarettes	62%	10%	8%	5%	3%	12%
Prescribed Medication	18%	20%	40%	9%	4%	9%
Alcohol	5%	2%	5%	35%	48%	5%
Marijuana	23%	7%	17%	20%	22%	11%
Psychedelics	74%	11%	12%	3%	0%	0%
Barbituates	82%	11%	6%	1%	0%	0%
Amphetamines	73%	11%	11%	4%	0%	0%
Cocaine	55%	12%	16%	14%	1%	1%
Heroin	96%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1% (?)

N=298

In an attitude survey given to students at the beginning of the political skills laboratory, a series of questions dealing with "self" perceptions revealed that the students are optimistic and positive about themselves and the changes that they perceive taking place in their lives. The vast majority seem to have a strong sense of being in control of their own destiny. They hardly consider themselves oppressed!

TABLE 3

Perceptions of "Self" Among Lab Students (pretest)

ITEM	A	B	C	D	E
A person like me really does not have much say in things nowadays.	3%	14%	10%	51%	23%
I often wish I was in a different "place" in my life than I am now.	3%	24%	16%	40%	17%
There are some things about myself that I would like to change.	21%	70%	4%	4%	1%
Basically I am optimistic about my personal future.	41%	46%	8%	5%	1%
Right now I feel there are significant changes taking place in my life.	44%	51%	3%	1%	1%
I seldom feel in control of the forces that are changing my life.	3%	11%	8%	63%	15%
Nothing much ever seems to come of those conscious decisions I make to change myself.	0%	12%	6%	62%	20%

A-Strongly agree B-Agree c-Neutral D-Disagree

E-Strongly disagree

All scores round to nearest whole number.

Their general theory of society, existence, and human behavior is also revealing. They are neither mystics nor ideologues. But instead they are very open to the idea that there are empirical answers to questions about human existence.

TABLE 4

Attitudes Towards History, Change, Philosophy, Etc.
(pretest)

ITEM	A	B	C	D	E
The history of civilization is controlled by forces much like biology is controlled by evolutionary forces.	6%	40%	26%	23%	5%
I am quite certain that life exists elsewhere in the universe.	25%	30%	35%	3%	4%
I believe there are ultimately answers to the questions that people over the years have asked about the nature of existence.	16%	45%	33%	6%	1%
There are explanation to human behavior just as there is a scientific theory of nature.	11%	67%	11%	9%	2%
One of the basic lessons of history is that you can't change human nature.	7%	31%	25%	32%	6%

When I die, I . . .	Will Cease To Exist	Heaven/ Hell	Reincarnate	Do not Know	None of These
	6%	33%	9%	42%	9%

A-Strongly agree B-Agree C-Neutral or Don't Know

D-Disagree E-Strongly disagree

All scores rounded to nearest whole number.

When the above two factors are combined with their initial high expectations for the course, the ingredients are certainly present to reinforce the idea that something significant is about to happen. Given the "legitimacy" that the university has in their mind, they also assumed they would benefit and "learn" from this experience. In short, is believing seeing?

TABLE 5

Lab Students' Expectations (pretest)

ITEM	A	B	C	D	E
My university seldom fulfills the expectations that I had for it when I first arrived.'	4%	12%	21%	55%	3%
Generally speaking, Chico State has been a positive influence on my life.	23%	60%	14%	3%	0%
I expect that this course will turn out to be a waste of time.	2%	2%	7%	49%	41%
I anticipate that the instructor of this course will have a lasting effect upon my thoughts and actions.	13%	56%	29%	3%	0%
The most important reason to go to college is to get a good paying job.	1%	13%	8%	48%	31%

A-Strongly agree B-Agree C-Neutral or Don't Know

D-Disagree E-Strongly disagree

All numbers rounded to nearest whole number.

Curriculum

The political skills laboratory met twice a week for two hours per session. The course lasted for eight weeks, and sections were offered both halves of the semester. Only one unexcused absence was allowed, and beyond that, absences were made-up through reading and writing assignments. This substitution was seldom required, however, because attendance was never a problem.

The course met in the Simulated Political Processes Laboratory which is a grouping of two large and six small rooms, all interconnected with a network of communication channels (telephones, video, an Edex tabulator system, a public address system, etc.). The course made full use of this equipment, including video playback in describing sessions.

The first day of the course is used to establish a "baseline." A simple exercise was given to subgroups (6-10 people). Using a can of Tinkertoys, they were asked to build a "stable and aesthetically pleasing structure." The manner in which the subgroup handled this problem "cold" or off the street was to establish their initial behaviors in terms of people and task orientations, separation or merging of planning and implementation phases, leadership, participation, body language, in-group/out-group perceptions, and so forth. When I discovered some groups making "stables," I added an exercise on one-way and two-way patterns of communication. This unwittingly came to serve as an excellent introduction to the first segment of the course--organizational development. The lab employed Doyle and Straus's Interaction Method of a facilitator and recorder as a model for organizing and running a meeting (Doyle and Straus, 1976). The "Premier's Speech" (which "simulates" a Soviet laser attack of an American missile test flight) served as the problem framework in which a student lab assistant and myself first role-played the facilitator and recorder before turning responsibility over to the group for developing a policy response (Jackson, 1974).

As in all segments of the course, this activity was followed by a debriefing session. Students were provided with logs and most took notes during these sessions. Concepts were defined, problems defined and redefined, actions reviewed, and historical parallels suggested. Direct links were also drawn between the lab course and the subject matter of the introductory course in which most of the students were concurrently enrolled.

The following session students returned to the groups they were in during the first session to practice the Interaction Method in a values clarification exercise (variations of the well-known bomb shelter or kidney machine exercises).

Slowly a list of insights was cumulatively assembled and placed each session on the blackboard; e.g., 1. organize to synergize, and 2. values: the hidden agenda.

The next segment of the course was devoted to developing skills as a bargainer. This segment was in many ways an extension of my doctoral research which conceptualized patterns of behavior from the perspective of exchange theory (Jackson, 1973). A series of simple exercises were used to develop and add additional items to the list on the blackboard. Nonverbal bargaining, Win As Much As You Can, and pokerchip based exercises were all used to breakdown the bargaining process into its component parts. The list on the blackboard expanded each session in the bargaining segment:

3. Non-verbal bargaining--"I know that you know that I know you know."
4. Trust Americans to look out for themselves.
5. Anticipate/respond
6. Signals
7. Bargaining repertoires
8. Power (disparity)
9. Reciprocity
10. Judicious use of threats and punishments.

During the semester in which the course was run in conjunction with the American Politics course, the bargaining segment was concluded with a collective bargaining exercise set in a small city government. In the international relations oriented variation, two-nation arms negotiation simulation was used. In both cases, the opportunities for a wide-ranging debriefing were considerable after spending approximately twelve hours over three weeks exploring the dynamics of the bargaining process. Procedural issues as well as explicit links to contemporary politics (such as Prop. 13 and the SALT talks) were readily made. From an instructor's point of view, this opportunity to really "teach" is unique when compared to a more traditional class setting.

Because educational goals took precedence over research considerations, the exact sequencing and procedures for returning individual test and survey results varied from one section to another. The structure of the course, however, remained basically unchanged for the two and one half year period during the course's development and testing. As data was gathered and analyzed, dead-end streets were abandoned and new paths pursued. The course and especially its evaluations were dynamic.

Data on personality and so forth that were measured the first day were returned at various appropriate places (unless a posttest was planned). For example, after the bargaining segment, the "T-P Leadership Questionnaire" (task and people orientations) was scored and comparisons between subgroups were made as a source of "possible" explanations for variations in behavior (Pfeiffer and Jones, 1969). In those sections in which a pretest and posttest were both given, participants did not score their own tests. Instead the scores were simply returned at the end of the last class session. When only a single test was given, participants scored their own (an educational experience in itself).[1]

---

[1]All students were given explicit assurances of anonymity. All scores on tests and surveys were shared with them, and all data were analyzed on a group and not an individual basis.

The next segment of the lab curriculum dealt with stress. It was organized around the concepts of altered states of consciousness and a holistic mind-body relationship. Students arrived to find chairs in a circle with a boom mike and television camera prominently located in the room. They were then asked to give improvisations begun with a phrase written on a 3 X 5 card (drawn randomly from a deck). The issues raised on these cards were generally philosophical and a highly anxious environment was changed into an intense and yet communal exchange of ideas. This experience was immediately followed (with little explanation) by a brief video tape of Elvis Presley singing "I Did It My Way," first in a 1973 concert and then at his last concert (1977). As participants reported in the debriefing, they had experienced sweaty palms, laughter, and a lump in their throat in the matter of two hours. I then left them with the question, "If I am able to systematically alter your mood in a prescribed manner, why don't you do that for yourself?"

When they returned the next session, students took and scored Dr. Thomas Holmes' test "The Impact of Life Changes" which relates life changes to health (Holmes, 1979). A discussion of this was followed by a presentation on altered states of consciousness and the two hemispheres of the brain. It was concluded with demonstrations of an EEG and an EMG machine using student volunteers. Breathing exercises were demonstrated and invariably numerous examples were given by students in the course who wanted to share an "experience" they had had in athletic training, self-hypnosis, etc.

As was the case in all other presentations, additional campus resources for taking a more indepth analysis (e.g., of stress management) were recommended. The class then subdivided with instructions that the next two scheduled class sessions would be arranged so that half the total group came for one of the two sessions.

The next segment of the lab proved to be the most intense of the course. Following the discussion of stress, participants were confronted in their next session with a crisis situation. After the initial scenario was set and roles assigned, a flow of messages began. One of the first contained the following demands:

> TO: The People of the United States
>
> FROM: People's Revolutionary Party, Logaton
>
> In order to insure the success of the people's uprising against the oppressive Gonzales' regime, the people of Logaton have placed the U.S. President and his party under arrest. This drastic step was necessary in order to prevent the continued plotting of those forces who would enslave the people of the world.
>
> The safe release of the President will be made when your corrupt, decadent government meets, in full, the following demands:
>
> 1. A public pronouncement condemning the activities of American based multi-national corporations.
> 2. The immediate withdrawal of overseas U.S. troops.
> 3. Withdrawal of all U.S. military advisory missions from the Third World.
> 4. An annual expenditure of $20 billion in grants to the United Nations for Third World economic development.
> 5. Upon the PRP's release of him, the immediate recall of Hiram Hooks as U.S. Ambassador to Logaton.
> 6. The immediate redistribution of American Fruit Packers banana lands to Logaton peasants.
> 7. The elimination of the Logaton debt of $75 million to the United States.
> 8. Diplomatic recognition of the PRP by the United States.
>
> Your compliance with these demands is expected within 24 hours (10 minutes in simulation time) or appropriate action will be taken (Jackson, 1973b:23).

Throughout this crisis situation every attempt was made to place as much pressure on the student-participants as reasonably possible. For example, Premier Gonzales, it was announced, had met "revolutionary justice." The life of the President's daughter was often threatened. Time demands were short and rigidly adhered to. News releases announced over the P.A. system brought additional information and pressures into the exercise, and the lab staff, which "played" the PRP, used the phone system to make "secret" calls to individual members of the American team as a means of "dividing and conquering."

Historical parallels to the Patty Hearst kidnapping and the recent situation in Iran, gave this simulated situation an uncanny aura of reality. Involvement in this exercise by students was unusually high. Tempers frequently became short and under the pressure much of what had been instructed earlier in the course was often lost in the confusion. In post-game debriefing sessions, the students often reported how mentally and physically exhausted they felt. In recent years, students (even during the height of the Iranian crisis) invariably chose to negotiate with the PRP, and it was not unusual for them to give into most or all of the demands in order to obtain the release of the President. What this reveals is difficult to interpret but is certainly cause for considerable additional reflection.

The post-game discussion of this exercise frew heavily on the work of Ole Holsti. Six lessons of crisis management were presented for the participants' consideration (Holsti, 1964; Holsti, 1965).

1. The primary decision-maker should rely on the consultations of his/her advisers in order to minimize personality-oriented decisions.

2. Advisers should be allowed to meet separately in order to facilitate open, frank discussions and the development of different alternatives.

3. Every effort should be made to expand decision time. Decision-makers need to avoid rushing into hastily developed decisions.

4. The decision-maker should maintain a number of options for his/her side and try to avoid taking initialy irrevocable decisions. In short, it is easier to escalate than deescalate a crisis.

5. One should leave his/her opponent certain options; do not "paint him/her into a corner."

6. Keep chanels of communication open with your opponent (Jackson, 1973b: 18-19).

Historical comparisons of the simulation to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the outbreak of the First World War, and police strategy in crisis situations were also discussed as ways of illustrating the above six points. Decision-making under conditions of stress, in short, took on a new meaning for participants.

In the following class session, video playback of their activities also provided the basis for many additional comments and an opportunity to reinforce the points made in the initial debriefing session.

It is interesting to note that students who I meet years after they participated in this exercise (which in a simpler form was part of an earlier "simulation" lab curriculum) recall their experience in great detail and always make comparisons to contemporary events. This exercise, in short, is for many one of the most intense and memorable in their college education.

The final simulation of the course was a coalition building problem. The American Government related sections worked on a Redwoods Park exercise playing different interest groups and governmental agencies. The international relations oriented course "played" an exercise that is set in the domestic politics of a hypothetical Latin American country. These concluding exercises required a number of sessions to complete and in many ways were a culminating experience, bringing together most of the course goals (bargaining, organizational development, etc.).

The final session of the course was devoted to administering posttest instruments and reviewing the course. Ample use was made of the videotape "history" in order to allow students to judge for themselves exactly what they believe took place during the eight week experience. The final activity was to administer the University's standardized course evaluation plus allow students the voluntary opportunity to give written comments in an open-ended evaluation. They then adjourned to a local pizza parlor (a now well-established tradition) to retell old adventures and "war" stories that they shared together. I have never found a section of this course that did not end on a positive, upbeat note, despite the intensity of some of their experiences.

Evaluation

The literature dealing with the evaluation of simulation and games is concerned primarily with the comparison of this teaching technique with more conventional methods. The work of Sarane Boocock forms the foundation for much of this (Boocock, 1966; Boocock & Schild, 1968). Her evidence along with others who have pursued this question have concluded that simulations are neither better nor worse than traditional techniques, though they do generate considerable more enthusiasm among students (Orbach, 1977; Cousins, 1977; Shade and Paine, 1975; Henderson and Foster, 1976; Robinson, 1966; Fennessey, 1975; Gray and Walcott, 1977; Feste, 1978; Nunnally, 1975; Greenblat, 1973; Cherryholmes, 1966; Abt, 1970; Rockler, 1979; Garvey, 1971; Hulsey, 1977; Fuller, 1973). Nowhere in the expanding body of literature in this area is there a systematic analysis of what changes (if any) take place among students who participate in an entire course which makes widespread use of simulations and games as a means for developing behavioral skills as well as the acquisition of information.

Almost all researchers in this area hasten to point out the difficulties inherent in evaluating experientially based education. Karen Ann Feste makes this point quite well. "The difficulty raised at the measurement level, for examining simulation impact, is that the acquisition of skills and interests ... may not proceed in specific behavioral sequences to be observed in a fairly standardized format, or appropriately translated into qualitatively distinct responses (as in learning the correct answer to a factual query)" (Feste, 1978: 134-135). As Feste and many others point out, because so much of the simulation experience is subjective, it can only be measured in terms of the participant's personal assessments.

For purposes of evaluating the political skills laboratory a quasi-experimental design was used, relying primarily on pretests and posttests. Not all instruments were used in all sections. Instead, as one line of analysis was pursued and analyzed, another would take its place.

In terms of the overall evaluation of the course, the same pattern of enthusiasm that others have reported prevailed. On both the standardized and open-ended evaluation, students gave the course a very positive evaluation. On the standardized evaluation, a three item scale designed to measure "student perceived learning" was ranked consistently at the top or above University-wide norms (25th to 75th percentile range). In the voluntary, open-ended written evaluation, 75% of those who wrote evaluations explicitly made positive comments about the course.

TABLE 6

Summation of Voluntary, Open-Ended Evaluations

ITEM	Percentage of Time Mentioned in Evaluations
Positive statements about course	75%
Learned how to deal better in/with groups	57%
Learned about self	39%
Positive statements about instructor	21%
Constructive criticisms: Areas for improvement	19%
Learned about what actually goes on in government	17%
Positive statements about group membership	14%
Course too short	8%
Critical statements about instructor	1%

N=77

In regards to perceptions of "self" (which were mentioned earlier), a comparison of attitudes at the beginning of the course with those at the end reveals no significant change (see Table III for items). This element of stability also held true for their opinions in regards to social change and their general social philosophy (See Table VI for items).

This element of stability is especially interesting because 39% of those who wrote open-ended course evaluations mentioned changes taking place within themselves. Part of the reason that the pretest and posttest were perhpas so stable is the fact that students to begin with already expressed the opinion that changes in their lives were already taking place. This "change orientation," in short, was merely confirmed by their experience.

The question of personality and political behavior is one that has intrigued me for years. The research of Robert Ziller and others who have employed his Self-Other Orientation instrument suggests a strong relationship between self-esteem and complexity with political behavior (Ziller, Stone, Jackson, & Terbovic, 1977). The pioneering work of Blake and Mouton in developing their concept of leadership (managerial grid) also hypothesized that people and task orientations are two additional social-psychological variable strongly related to political behavior.

To establish whether the sense of "change" that the students reported was in fact taking place in any fundamental way, these four variables were tested on the first and last days of the course for a two year period. In all four instances there was <u>no</u> significant pattern of change. The intense group experience did <u>not</u>, for example, increase their "people" orientation. An eight week course, even if exciting and positively received, does not appear to affect the participant's personality when measured by variables that reflect dimensions of the "political personality." Concerns that the political skills

laboratory might in fact be a disguised "sensitivity session" with all the dangers of personality related "fallout" did not seem to be an issue. Despite the fact that considerable information about "self" was presented on an individual basis (including video playback via the "unblinking eye"), this evidently perpetuated the student's perceptions that college was bringing about lasting changes in their personality without it in fact dramatically changing it (over the short-term at least).

TABLE 7

Pretest/Posttest Comparison of Personality Variables

VARIABLE	CHANGE
Self-Esteem	Not significant
Complexity	Not significant
People Orientation	Not significant
Task Orientation	Not significant

For the first year and a half of this study, the students repeated the initial Tinkertoy exercise at the end of the course. In both instances photographs of their "stable and aesthetically pleasing" structures were taken. These photographs were later exhibited in a research methods course where 10 independent Q-sorts were made. In not a single case was a significant difference between pretest and posttest structures revealed. If anything, the trend suggested that the posttest structures were less "stable and aesthetically pleasing." Boredom with this redundant task was no doubt the major reason for this pattern. Still, there were some posttest experiences that were unique. One memorable subgroup in its posttest turned the lights off in

the room, calling itself the Helen Keller Institute, and then proceeded to build their structure in the dark. The laughter and joy that went with this task reflected the positive interpersonal relationships that this one particular group of people developed during the lab.

One might concede at this point that in fact not much change had taken place as a result of so-called "training" in political skills. It was not until specific attitudes in regards to decision making were studied that a pattern of significant change began to emerge. Building on the research of David Louscher, a modified version of his attitude survey was administered (Louscher, 1978). On eleven of the twenty-one items, significant changes took place in a direction that suggests the participants' perspective on decision-making became one characterized by less "certainty" and more pragmatism.

TABLE 8

Attitudes on Decision-Making: Pretest/Posttest Comparison

ITEM	PRETEST (percent) POSTTEST(percent) A	B	C	D	E	KENDALL'S TAU C Significance
It is easy to take appropriate policy action when the facts are known.	6 11	35 9	24 7	30 48	5 24	TAU C = .37 Sig. = .0002
Decision makers are able to make a decision before the problem reaches crisis proportions.	5 2	33 20	27 16	30 53	5 9	TAU C = .28 Sig. = .003
Groups (teams, nations, etc.) cannot adequately plan for changing conditions.	8 7	19 25	6 15	59 51	8 2	N.S.
Miscalculation of other group's (teams, nation's decision, etc.) intentions is a major problem in making a decision.	22	59	13	5	2	TAU C = .22 Sig. = .009
There is always a solution to a crisis which will generally satisfy the concerned parties.	3 0	33 35	16 16	43 45	5 4	N.S.
It is not that difficult to make adequate plans for fluid situations.	6 0	24 15	40 7	27 69	3 9	TAU C = .45 Sig. = .000

TABLE 8
(continued)

ITEM	PRETEST (percent) POSTTEST (percent) A	B	C	D	E	KENDALL's TAU c Significance
Decisions are usually based on incomplete or misleading information.	5 2	22 35	16 22	43 36	14 5	TAU C = .17 Sig. = .05
The smaller the crisis, the easier the task of making a decision.	3 2	37 35	6 6	48 50	6 7	N.S.
The process by which national policy decisions are made is quite rational.	3 0	22 16	37 29	29 42	10 13	TAU C = .18 Sig. = .04
A decision maker acts upon what he/she construes as the situation, rather than acting on an objective analysis of the situation.	13 11	56 56	19 18	11 13	2 2	N.S.
Any crisis may be prolonged so that decision makers may gather pertinent information.	2 5	34 36	15 5	34 38	16 15	N.S.
Generally, national policy decision makers consider the nation's short-range objectives rather than its long-range objectives.	11 11	37 44	26 26	19 15	6 4	N.S.
All the facts relating to a crisis can be determined during that crisis.	2 0	8 7	10 7	64 67	17 18	N.S.
A system of two opposing superpowers is more stable than a system of numerous equal powers.	0 9	30 29	24 24	27 29	17 9	N.S.
Threat can maintain peace when problems cannot be resolved.	2 2	26 36	16 25	42 31	15 5	TAU C = .21 Sig. = .02
Countries should intervene in the affairs of other countries when it is necessary for the maintenance of world peace.	11 17	44 56	25 15	16 9	3 4	TAU C = .17 Sig. = .04
Strong alliances (coalitions) are necessary for survival.	11	54	19	16	0	TAU C = .26 Sig. = .003
It is pragmatically naive to speak of politics in terms of ethics.	5 4	35 35	30 24	27 33	3 5	N.S.
A country should disregard its commitments when they are no longer expedient.	3 0	11 19	33 21	43 53	10 8	N.S.

TABLE 8
(continued)

ITEM	PRETEST (percent) POSTTEST (percent) A	B	C	D	E	KENDALL'S TAU C Significance
Decision makers respond differently under conditions of stress than in non-stress circumstances.	25 49	67 45	8 2	0 2	0 2	TAU C = .23 Sig. = .006
The same decision makers will act differently when they perform in different social structures (e.g., structured vs. open or autocratic vs. democratic).	22 37	69 60	9 4	0 0	0 0	TAU C = .17 Sig. = .04

All percentages rounded to nearest whole number. N = 118

Of particular interest is the item on stress. I suspect their experience in the "Presidential Kidnap" accounts for a great deal of this intensifying in their attitude that stress does in fact affect decision making. The change in their perceptions of the importance of allies and the use of threats are also interesting. But a point that should not be overlooked is that the initial perspective of the majority of opinions on the pretest conforms quite closely to the wisdom of the social sciences. On particulars, students are often ill-informed, but I am always amazed at how this sorts out on a conventional attitude survey, for they <u>appear</u> surprisingly sophisticated at the outset. The significant shifts in attitudes that took place were less "revolutionary" and more of an intensifying of an already existing point of view. Part of this is, no doubt, a group-think phenomenon, but more importantly, I believe it also reflects the limitations of survey research. On fixed-response surveys, students, I believe, are quite test savy. It is analogous to public opinion polls that show people having an attitude on the SALT II treaty but who are also unable to identify the signators of the proposed treaty. It is one

thing to express attitudes on issues, it is quite another to be able to successfully manage a crisis. I am, for instance, quite concerned about how easy the students give in to the demands of the kidnappers in the crisis exercise. In my role-playing of the guerrillas, I am amazed at how easy it is to manipulate the students. It is a "reality" that is difficult to know how to deal with. I do believe it does point up the fact that the professor's intellectual necessities for making professional judgements is just as much or even more a part of a course like this than in a traditional course. In the latter, the role of the teacher is much more formalized. In the informal atmosphere of a simulation/games based curriculum, the necessity of intellectual choice can be easily obscured. That does not mean that it has gone away.

The data from the decision-making survey does confirm the student's report of change. "Significant" changes have been uncovered. What I do not believe has come through from the data analysis is the more subtle nature of the interpersonal experiences that take place in the lab. To actually "get to know" their fellow students in a non-social setting is a unique experience for not only the incoming freshmen but for the graduating senior and 50 year-old "reentry" student as well. This need for an interpersonal dimension to their intellectual experiences is one seldom reinforced by conventional classroom experiences. From observing the power of this relationship, it has become my firm belief that educating students must include <u>training</u> which specifically reinforces intellectualizing.

<u>Summation</u>

It has been a rare professional experience to design a course with both a unique set of goals and an unusual application of modern technology. I believe I can say that it is unlike any other. The intrinsic pleasure of taking a collection of elements and weaving them into something new has given my

teaching a dimension that I quite frankly do not share with other academicians. Experimentation in the classroom is hardly at the top of professional organizations' agendas. Yet I have come to realize that how one teaches reveals far more about their politics than anything he/she could ever say. Students know this. Most professors exorcise themselves to a considerable extent in avoiding a confrontation with this simple proposition.

Systematically fine-tuning a course is hardly unique. But doing so through the application of social science tools is a good "reality check" on one's alleged intellectual techniques. It is easy to forget the limitations of social science's scope and methods. Comparing computerized printouts to one's own judgements is to reveal a great deal about both. It is an experience I recommend to all who try to practice what they preach. Is believing seeing?

One of the most important benefits of the political skills course does not appear in the empirical evaluation. This has been the positive externalities to my core courses from which the vast majority of students in the lab have been drawn. A class of 160 takes on an entirely new reality when 60 or more have been involved in an intense and personal activity observed by the lecturer (as lab trainer). The opportunity for using one to support the other is invaluable for purposes of offering examples.

To be able to successfully design a positively evaluated lab and lecture course has been a genuine professional challenge. To do so without disrupting the personalities of the lab participants as well as avoiding polarization of responses to often intense, personal experiences has been the result of careful planning and continual minor adjustments in the curriculum of both lab and lecture.

Has the political skills course made students better prepared to participate in the political system? I believe it has, for a university is, in many ways, a microcosm of much of our technocratic political culture. These students

interacted with one another to deal with problems as they defined them. While the selection of the parameters was beyond their responsibility, the manner in which they dealt with them was largely up to them. The variations that this often takes continue to surprise this author, who first help John Raser run a simulation in 1967 (Raser, 1969). The fact that they leave this non-authoritarian experience feeling good about it, themselves, and their fellow classmates has, I believe, something to do with creating a democracy. I seeing believing after all?

REFERENCES

Clark Abt, Serious Games, (1970) New York: Viking Press.

Bruno Bettelheim, "Education and the Reality Principle," American Educator, vol. 3, no. 4, (Winter, 1979).

Robert Blake and Jane Mouton, The Managerial Grid, (1964) Houston: Guif.

Sarane Boocock, "An Experimental Study of the Learning Effects of Two Games with Simulated Environments," American Behavioral Scientist, vol. 10, no. 3, (Oct. 1966).

Sarane Boocock and E.O. Schild, Simulation Games in Learning, (1968) Beverly Hills: Sage.

Cleo Cherryholmes, "Some Current Research on Effectiveness of Educational Simulations," American Behavioral Scientist, vol. 10, no. 3 (Oct. 1966).

Jack Cousins, "Simulation Games for Political Education," Simulation and Games, vol. 8, no. 3 (Sept. 1977).

John Dewey, "Democracy and Educational Administration," School and Society, vol. 45, no. 1162 (April 3, 1937).

Michael Doyle and David Straus, How to Make Meetings Work, (1976) New York: Wyden Books.

Gail M. Fennessey, "Simulation, Gaming, and Conventional Instruction: An Experimental Comparison," Simulation and Games, vol. 6, no. 3, (Sept. 1975).

Karen Ann Feste, "A Strategy to Evaluate Learning in Classroom Games," Teaching Political Science, vol. 5, no. 2 (Jan. 1978).

Jack W. Fuller, "Simulation in a Political Science Classroom," Improving College and University Teaching, vol. 21, no. 4 (Aug. 1973).

Dale M. Garvey, "Simulation: A Catalogue of Judgements, Findings, and Hunches," Educational Aspects of Simulations, edited by P.J. Tansey, (1971) London: McGraw Hill.

Virginia Gray and Charles Walcott, "Simulation, Learning, and Student Attitudes," Teaching Political Science, vol. 4, no. 3 (April 1977).

Cathy S. Greenblat, "Teaching with Simulation Games: A Review of Claims and Evidence," Teaching Sociology, vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1973).

Thomas Henderson and John Foster, "Teaching American Government with Games," Simulation and Games, vol. 7, no. 2 (June 1976).

Thomas Holmes, "The Impact of Life Changes," Nation's Business, Jan. 1979.

Ole R. Holsti, "The 1914 Case," American Political Science Review, vol. 59, no. 2 (June 1965).

Ole R. Holsti, Brody, and North, "Measuring Affect and Action in International Reaction Models," International Politics and Foreign Policy, edited by Rosenau, (1969) New York: Free Press.

John Hulsey, Jr., "New Insights into Simulation as an Effective Method of Teaching Social Studies," High School Journal, vol. 60, no. 6 (March 1977).

Robert M. Jackson, "Patterns of Political Interaction: Reciprocity and Coercion," International Studies Quarterly, vol. 17, no. 4 (Dec. 1973).

Robert M. Jackson, Simulated International Politics: Classroom Exercises, (1973) St. Louis: Consortium for International Studies Education.

Robert M. Jackson, "Classroom Simulation Exercises: The Premier's Speech," International Studies Notes, vol. 1, no. 3 (Fall 1974).

Everett C. Ladd, Jr., Where Have All The Voters Gone?, (1978) New York: W.W. Norton.

David J. Louscher, "Attitudinal Impact of a Short Term Minimal Structure Simulation," International Studies Notes, (1978).

J.C. Nunnally, "The Study of Change in Evaluation Research," in Handbook of Evaluation Research, edited by M. Guttentag, (1975) Beverly Hills: Sage.

Eliezer Orbach, "Some Theoretical Considerations in the Evaluation of Instructional Simulation Games," Simulation and Games, vol. 8, no. 3 (Sept. 1977).

J. William Pfeiffer and J.E. Jones (eds.), "T-P Leadership Questionnaire," Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training, vol. 1 (1969) San Diego: University Associates.

John Raser, Simulation and Society, (1969) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

James Robinson, Anderson, Hermann, and Snyder, "Teaching with Inter-Nation Simulation and Case Studies," American Political Science Review, vol. 60, no. 1 (March 1966).

Michael Rockler, "Simulation/Gaming and Education for Increasing Human Potential," Simulation/Games for Learning, vol. 9, no. 2 (Summer 1979).

William Shade and Joann Paine, "Simulation in the Classroom," Teaching Political Science, vol. 3, no. 1 (Oct. 1975).

Ziller, Stone, Jackson, and Terbovie, "Self-Other Orientation and Political Behavior," in A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders, edited by Milburn and Hermann, (1977) New York: Free Press.

DISCUSSION PAPERS

78-1 Hutchinson, W.H., Commencement Address, (School of Behavioral and Social Sciences, May 20, 1978).

78-2 Donovan, Marjorie, High School and White-Collar Work in Nineteenth Century America: Let Who Must Achieve.

78-3 Ostrom, C.R., A Case Study of Tin and Third World Producer States.

78-4* Jackson, Robert M., The Psycho-Politics of the Fourth Dimension.

78-5 de Jamaer, Karin A. and Marvin M. Megibow, Hemispheric Processing of Auditorily Presented Emotional and Non-Emotional Nouns.

78-6 Perelman, Michael A., Political Economy, Household Production and the Creation of the Social Division of Labor: A Reinterpretation.

78-7 The State of Black Studies in White Institutions: Proceedings of a Conference held at CSU, Chico, October 27-28, 1978.

79-1* Ebeling, Jon and Michael King, Application of SPSS to Data Archives Available in the C.S.U.C.

79-2 Levenson, Rosaline, Job Security in Public Employment: A Vanishing Myth.

79-3 Feminist Visions of the Future: Proceedings of a Conference held at CSU, Chico, March 2-4, 1979.

79-4 Urbanowicz, Charles F., Why Science Fiction and Anthropology? Why Yes?

79-5 Abramson, Edward E. and Drew Jones, Reducing Junk Food Palatability and Consumption by Aversive Conditioning.

79-6 Bronson, Edward J., The Exclusion of Scrupled Jurors in Capital Cases: The California Evidence on Conviction--Proneness and Representativeness.

79-7 Peevers, Barbara Hollands, Androgyny on the TV Screen? An Analysis of Sex Role Portrayal.

79-8 Peevers, Barbara Hollands, Male Attitudes Toward Feminism: Possible Antecedents and Consequences.

79-9 Perelman, Michael A., Industrial Organization and the Social Division of Labor.

79-10 Quinones, Julio, Machismo and Virginidad: Sex Roles in Latin America.

79-11 Peevers, Barbara Hollands, The Development of the Perception of Others: A Longitudinal Study.

Discussion Papers

79-12 Chinas, Beverly N., Is There Life For Women's Business After The Multinationals Invade?

79-13 Harich, M. Virginia Frazier, Correcting Confusion About the Infectious Nature of Syphilis.

80-1 Gash, Hugh, Class Inclusion and Role Taking: Structural Mediation.

80-2 Francis, Gary, Ceteris Paribus Rejected: A Speculative Profile of the Social Economy.

80-3 Ostrom, C.R., Third World Producers vs. Developed World Consumers: A Comparison of the International Agreements for Tin and Natural Rubber.

80-4 Martin, William C., The Religious Factor in Long-Term Care for the Elderly.

80-5 Jackson, Robert M., Assessing a Political Skills Curriculum.

*Out of print